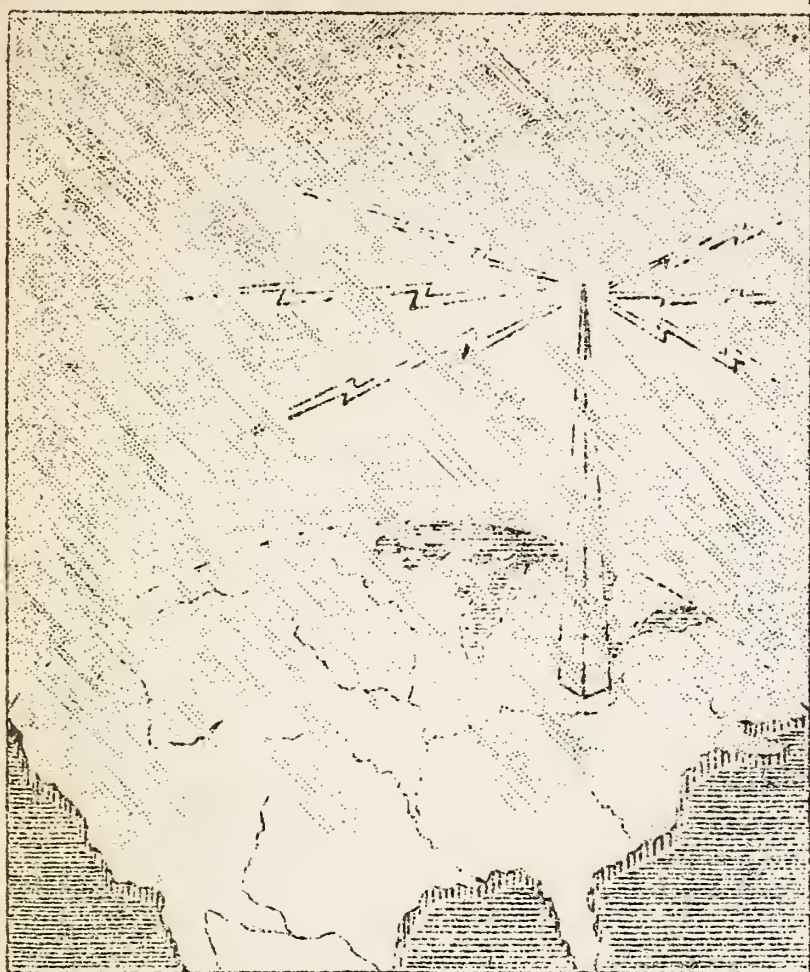


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Torrey ✓



FORTUNES WASHED AWAY

"FARMING AT
BEREA COLLEGE"

Broadcast No. 8 in the third year
in a series of dramatizations
of better land use

WLW, Cincinnati

June 15, 1940 1:15-1:30 P.M.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
DAYTON, OHIO

SOUND: Thunder and rain...

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

ANNOUNCER

Where the bluegrass ends and the mountains begin, is Berea, Kentucky. Berea, mirror of the mountains, is the home of college students from Bear Wallow, Little Cake, Rabbit Hash. To Berea College come hill folk from Prosperity, Whynot, Cutskin. The boys in the woodwork shop are from Stamping Ground, Pine Knot, Knuckles. The girls behind the weaving looms are from Nonesuch, O. K., Bright Shade. For Berea College is a mirror of the mountains. Too, it is a promise of a greater future for those mountains.

ORGAN: MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME.

ANNOUNCER

The sun shines bright on my old Kentucky home...but it has cast many a shadow on Berea College. No one man could have made this remarkable school, for it is the outgrowth of the plans and wisdom of many an educator. It was conceived by the Reverend John G. Fee. In 1845, he was preaching in Lewis County...

FEE (preaching off mike)

...and so, my good friends, we have a direct statement to that effect from both the Old Testament and the New. The third thing symbolized by the ordinance of baptism is...

SOUND: Men stamping down the aisle, crowd noises.

FEE

What means this interruption?

RUFFIAN

Come on, preacher...you're going with us.

FEE

I am engaged in the exercise of a constitutional right and a religious duty. Please do not interrupt. As I was saying, the third thing symbolized by the ordinance...

RUFFIAN

Enough of that. Come on!

SOUND: Men struggling, and walking down the aisle...

FEE

But my overshoes -- I left them in the pulpit.

SECOND RUFFIAN (laughing)

You won't need overshoes where you're going.

RUFFIAN

All right, get on that horse.

FEE

I am not going willingly. I will not get on.

RUFFIAN

Then we'll put you on. Give me a hand.

SECOND RUFFIAN (grunts)

Up you go.

SOUND: Several horses start trotting off.

FEE

May I ask where we are going?

RUFFIAN

We're going to hang you over on Birch Fork.

FEE

I supposed as much. But you know I have done no crime, and that I would not harm you.

SECOND RUFFIAN

Listen, men, I'm against this hanging business. You can count me out.

RUFFIAN

Well, wait a minute!

SOUND: Horses stop.

RUFFIAN

We'll just make you a little proposition, preacher. If you promise, plumb sure, to leave the county and never come back, we might let you go.

FEE

I dare not make such a promise. You might be sick or have a tree fall on you, and send for me to pray for you.

RUFFIAN (wavering)

Well, now, I never thought about that. All right, you win, preacher.....(fade out).

ANNOUNCER

Reverend Fee was led to the county line and released. But he was not always so fortunate. He was mobbed in Mason and Bracken and Madison counties. His wife kept many a lonely vigil.

SOUND: Door opens and closes...

MATILDA (with relief)

Oh, John, I'm so glad you're home. Everytime you leave I'm afraid you won't come back.

FEE

We were mobbed again. Robert Jones was beaten badly, but they finally released me.

MATILDA

It seems like there are mobs everywhere. And you won't even carry a gun.

FEE

No, Matilda, I believe in the right of self defense, but I do not believe in the practice of carrying arms. Oftentimes they are more a source of danger than a means of safety.

MATILDA

You have your convictions, John, and you never change. And you know that I am with you in everything you do.

FEE

Dearest Matilda. My father has disowned me. My friends are afraid to come into my house. But you have remained by my side.

MATILDA

That's because I believe as you do. Sometimes I think you must have inherited your courage from these mountains. You're like the trees -- strong and sturdy...

FEE (laughing faintly)

...and sometimes I'm just as thick. You should have seen the land we covered today. It is more of a jungle than a forest. As Robert Said, "a rabbit coundn't get through without pinning back his ears."

MATILDA

It must be like that land you got from Mr. Clay.

FEE

Very much so. And that land, Matilda, will someday be the scene of our new church. I have my heart set on that plateau, looking out across the knobs. Someday I'll build a church there -- a church that will oppose slavery. I'll do it if I have to build it with my own hands.

MATILDA

And I will help you, John.

FEE

Our church. Who knows, someday it may be a shrine for all who believe as we do.

MATILDA

It was generous of Mr. Clay to give you that ten acres. It must be worth twelve to fifteen dollars.

FEE

Cassius Clay believes as we do. Our church -- a church that stands for freedom -- a church in the woods.

ORGAN: THE LITTLE BROWN CHURCH IN THE WILDWOOD.

ANNOUNCER

John Fee did build that church -- a church that grew in spite of furious opposition. In 1858 he was joined by John A. Rogers, a graduate of Oberlin College.

SOUND: Door opens and closes...

Fee

Welcome back, friend Rogers. I have been looking for you every day.

ROGERS

I came as soon as I received your letter. Do you still believe we should found a college on this ridge?

FEE

More than ever. The school is a success. I see no reason why it should not grow.

ROGERS

It has great possibilities. But we must make our individual views more harmonious. You want the college to stand for freedom. I agree with you there, but it should be even more. It should be for the mountain people.

FEE

There'll be no disagreement on that point, John.

ROGERS (with emphasis)

It's only natural that the two should go together. The people of the mountains own land, but they do not own slaves. They stand for freedom.

FEE

Will the state legislature have to act on our petition?

ROGERS

No, I've gone into that matter. Under a general law of the state of Kentucky, we can draw up a charter and file it at Richmond and at Frankfort. I tell you, this college is going to be a turning point in the lives of the mountain people. A college for men who believe in freedom -- a college for the mountains.

ORGAN: SNEAK IN THE LITTLE BROWN CHURCH IN THE WILDWOOD.

FEE

A dream come true. Yet, somehow, I always knew it would.

ROGERS

And the name of this college?

FEE

I recall the 17th chapter of Acts. "And the brethren sent Paul and Silas unto Berea"....where the people "received the word with all readiness of mind." Let us call this college -- Berea.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT

ANNOUNCER

Thus Berea College -- a college for the mountains -- came into being. And now, once more we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and here is Ewing Jones.

JONES

Thanks, Berea was founded by John G. Fee and John A. Rogers. Its development was chiefly through the guidance of such great educators as Edward H. Fairchild, William G. Frost, and Dr. William J. Hutchins. Now Dr. Hutchins' son, Dr. Francis S. Hutchins, is carrying on the good work as president. And before we go any farther, our thanks to those who helped us prepare this story -- and I think they give us a good cross section of life at Berea: Charles S. Price, who for 17 years has been director of the Department of Agriculture; Dr. John Barrow, librarian and his assistant, Miss Floyd; Bertha Green, a student from Owsley County, working her way through as waitress at historic Boone Tavern; Miss Clara Klippel, secretary to President Hutchins; and Roy Walters, a Berea graduate and publicity director.

Well, you might guess that Berea College has a farm, built around modern conservation lines. The history of this farm -- the way it's been built up year after year -- is a story in itself, and I'm going to ask H. K. Gayle, Kentucky state coordinator of the Soil Conservation Service, to give us that story. Hub?

GAYLE

Ewing, this being dinnertime, I'm going to start in with the garden, which is in the bottomlands, and go up the slopes. The 60-acre garden is flat. The boys grow around 30 varieties of vegetables for the college boarding halls each year. They can around 30,000 gallons of beans and tomatoes and such each year.

JONES

And how is the garden's fertility kept up?

GAYLE

It has a cover crop each year. That's one of the chief principles of the farming system at Berea -- keep the land under some kind of cover all of the time. Mr. Price plants rye and vetch, plows it under in the spring. He uses liberal applications of manure from the dairy barn, and commercial fertilizer.

JONES

Now, the general farmland.

GAYLE

It's perfectly flat land, north of town. Twenty years ago it would produce from 15 to 20 bushels of corn per acre. This soil, you see, is naturally poor soil...low in phosphorus, and very acid. It has been limed and phosphated, and tile drained.

GAYLE (cont'd)

At first they used a rotation of corn, rye-cover crop, soybeans harvested for seed, with the soybeans tops remaining on the soil and disked in after hogs had been fed there, wheat and grass. The grass was left for two or three years and then the rotation started over again.

JONES

And the present rotation?

GAYLE

Since 1930 Mr. Price has dropped out soybeans and wheat. He uses a rotation of corn, followed by a rye-vetch cover crop, which is pastured off in the spring, then grass for several years. Again, the land is never without some sort of cover on it except while the corn is coming up. The average production now is around 80 bushels of corn per acre, or 12 tons of corn silage. And that, Ewing, is quite a change in production.

JONES

Indeed it is. Now let's go on up the slopes. How about the pasture land?

GAYLE

Berea College pastures today stand out like a garden spot, compared to other pastures in Madison County. There's 100 acres of it. Fifteen years ago that land wouldn't grow 15 bushels of corn an acre. It was eroded, impoverished -- well, just shot. But the Berea agriculturists went to work on it, limed and phosphated, and that treatment, by the way, didn't cost more than \$5 an acre. It was treated with manure. The gullies were filled with brush and with broomcorn stalks from the broom factory.

GAYLE (cont'd)

It was seeded down with a mixture of orchard grass, lespedeza, redtop, and clover -- and as you might expect, bluegrass is coming in more and more each year. The pasture is clipped twice a year and not grazed too closely.

JONES

And this is in the "knobs" region, a region of poor soil.

GAYLE

Yet this pasture has one of the best sods in the state outside of the central bluegrass. There's no erosion now. It pastures something like 150 dairy animals, besides sheep and hogs.

JONES

That ought to put to rest the idea that some folks have -- that it isn't worth while to pay out money to build up pastures. Now, the woodlands...

GAYLE

Five thousand acres of so-called "forests" were bought around 1900. They were cutover, eroded, burned and grazed, covered with about as many tenants as good trees. The hillsides had been farmed to death. As Mr. Price puts it, it was just terrible. Well, the college helped relocate the tenants and went to work on the woodlands. Now the entire region is covered with an excellent growth of young timber. And for the first time, this year they are making selective cutting. The lumber from that timber is going into the woodwork shops for the students to use in making furniture.

JONES

That shows you that even a hill farm can be made to make money if the land is handled properly. Any farmer can work toward

JONES (cont'd)

the same results if he uses common sense conservation farming methods. And I should imagine that is what the future farmers of the hills will do, with all of the Berea graduates going back to farm homes to put into practice the lessons they learned at school.

GAYLE

Not all of them, Ewing. Most of them, of course, are going back to farm homes, to help one or two families each. But you'd be surprised how many are becoming vocational agriculture teachers, farm managers, or accepting government positions where they can help many families. And out of the 1939 graduating class from the department of agriculture at Berea, practically everyone is now profitably engaged in some field of agriculture at Berea or in the Southern Highlands.

JONES

And that record speaks for itself. Thanks for this report, Hub Gayle, Kentucky state coordinator of the Soil Conservation Service. And we give a salute to the men who have made and are continuing to make Berea College outstanding -- a college in the hills, where farm boys learn to be scientific farmers -- conservation farmers. This is Ewing Jones, speaking for the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, inviting you to be with us again next week at this same time.

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

